

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1 through 21 (Canceled).

22. (Currently amended) A barrel for use with a tampon applicator assembly comprising:

an insertion tip having a plurality of petals;

a main section having a taper ratio of about 1.07 to about 1.15; and

a finger grip having a first region, a gripping region, and a second region,

wherein said first region intersects with said main section at a first plane having a first outer dimension, said gripping region intersects with said first region and has a second outer dimension, and said second region intersects with said gripping region and has a third outer dimension, said first outer dimension being larger than said second outer dimension and said third outer dimension being larger than said second outer dimension, and

wherein said first outer dimension defines a maximum outer dimension of said barrel.

23. (Original) The assembly as in claim 22, wherein said maximum outer dimension is located closer to said finger grip than to said insertion tip.

24. (Original) The assembly as in claim 22, wherein said third outer dimension is equal to said first outer dimension.

25. Cancelled

26. (Original) The assembly as in claim 22, wherein said insertion tip has a taper ratio of more than about 0.66.

27. (Original) The assembly as in claim 22, wherein said plurality of petals have a petal length-to-width ratio of about 2 to about 3.